

BEST FUNDING PRACTICES FOR WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

**An Analysis and Recommendations
by the
California Biodiversity Council
Watershed Work Group**

**Presentation to the California Biodiversity Council
September 20, 2000**

**Best Funding Practices for Watershed Restoration –
An Analysis and Recommendations by the California Biodiversity Council
Watershed Work Group**

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Acknowledgements

The California Resources Agency and the Natural Resources and Conservation Service, as co-chairs of the Watershed Work Group, wish to thank all the participants of the work group. Their expertise and constructive comments allowed the group to make significant progress on a topic that has been a major concern for those in the watershed management community. Many of the participants volunteered part or all of their time.

We would also like to thank in advance the California Biodiversity Council for considering and pursuing the recommendations in this paper.

-California Biodiversity Council Watershed Work Group-

BEST FUNDING PRACTICES FOR WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Executive Summary

There is a critical need to develop a framework that can support the hundreds of existing watershed groups across the state. This is the first of a series of documents produced by the California Biodiversity Council Watershed Work Group to shape this framework. Why an initial focus on funding? The level of funding for watershed restoration is increasing along with the interest. Proposition 12 and 13, along with targeted Federal funds have focused increasing attention on watershed management, paralleled by increased participation by the Legislature and groups such as the Regional Council of Rural Counties. With over 40 significant funding programs, what is emerging is a confusing web of funding sources, rules and processes. This is creating difficulties in the application and delivery of funds, resulting in confusion and frustration on the part of very dedicated and talented participants. There are opportunities to improve the funding decisions and delivery process with the end result being more effective watershed programs.

Watershed Work Group:

The participants included landowners, watershed group members, agency staff, and interest groups. Key issues identified included streamlining the application process, ensuring accurate accountability, providing sufficient technical assistance and accessibility for watershed groups and landowners, and educating key policy makers. The California Resources Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service chaired the sessions.

Best Funding Practices and Issues

1) A Streamlined Application and Selection Process

Application and selection processes are written to comply with enabling statutes. However, the variety and complexity of these procedures, developed independently by a multitude of jurisdictions, makes it difficult for the applicant to track and to leverage funds. There are often universal areas of information needed, and applicants are required to respond to a multitude of similar procedural guidelines resulting in a duplication of efforts. In addition, applicants may find that after investing a considerable amount of effort in responding to an application, that the project is not eligible.

The pre-proposal process currently used by some entities can provide a screening process to provide initial information that will allow applicants to alter or halt the application prior to a large investment of time and expenses.

Inter and intra-agency coordination in planning and executing funding programs has also proven very beneficial to both the agency and the applicant. Coordination of grant information workshops is useful in streamlining the procedure as well.

The variety of funding sources and requirements also makes it difficult for many potential applicants to track the availability of funds. A comprehensive statewide common database of watershed funding does not exist.

2) More efficient administration of funds.

There is often a lengthy process for funds to reach the applicant once the successful projects have been identified. Although many of the requirements that dictate the process are in response to legal and fiscal constraints, it has caused frustration among applicants. Compounding the problem is the variety of grant cycles and the added pressures of working with sub-contractors, the seasonal restrictions and the need to combine and coordinate funding. Also, the amount of agency staff to administer grants has not increased in proportion to the increase in size and complexity of the funding sources and scope. Some organizations also lack the skills and/or capacity to successfully apply for and administer the grants and other funds and it is difficult to obtain financial assistance for these skills and tasks. Up-front costs are usually not eligible for reimbursement, an additional constraint for organization with less capacity.

Some efforts have been initiated to address this issue and have proven possible. A realistic schedule of the grant process is provided initially so applicants can plan accordingly. Applicants are being notified in a timely manner. Some agencies provide advance funds. Technical assistance for groups is being provided in the ensuing year (see Implementation plan).

3) Provide Accurate And Comprehensive Reporting And Accountability

Granting sources (Federal, state and other) are increasingly requiring accountability and analysis of the effectiveness of the funded projects. This requires a coordinated, consistent and universal method(s) of measuring performance and effectiveness. This does not currently exist. This data is critical to obtaining further financial and other areas of support.

4) Provide Technical Assistance and Outreach to Watershed Groups, Landowner and other Grant Applicants.

Technical and administrative skills are critical to successfully responding to and administering funding proposals. Most grants do not fund up-front costs and many smaller organizations do not have the time nor expertise necessary to be knowledgeable in the requirements (which differ between agencies) and other skills needed. As a result, agencies receive poor quality and ineligible proposals for what is often a potentially viable project.

Funding agencies can provide valuable assistance. Outreach programs targeted to specific groups needs and schedules, are also valuable.

5) Address Regional and Economic Differences

Funding programs do not always reflect the significant regional differences in California, including natural and cultural features, demographics and economics. This elevates the role of regional staff knowledgeable in the unique features of their jurisdiction.

6) Ensure Funding Decision are Based on Sound Science

Scientific and peer review both initially and throughout the project is critical to ensuring the success of meeting the projects goals. Internal scientific review panels as well as select citizens committees can and have provided valuable input.

7) Leverage Multiple Funding Sources

Often multiple funding sources are required to meet the needs of the project either through matching funds or filling funding gaps. The potential exists to further utilize private and other funds for leveraging grants. However, with the multitude of funding options available to local watershed groups, it is increasingly difficult for local groups to track the various sources, processes, schedules and other requirements of each funding source.

8) Educate Key Policy Makers on the Merits of Watershed Planning

Legislators, government officials and other policy makers are critical to providing fiscal support for watershed management. However, many persons in management, legislative and policy arenas do not fully understand the concept of watersheds and the importance of a watershed approach to making sound and balanced environmental policy decisions.

9) Identifying And Filling Funding Gaps

A responsible funding program should identify funding gaps for planning the present and future allocation of limited resources. The Watershed Work Group identified a number of funding gaps in the area of capacity; including long term operation and maintenance and development of watershed plans, services such as monitoring, evaluation and environmental education, and other areas such as funding unlisted species and protection of pristine areas. The recommendations are listed at the end of the Executive Summary.

Implementation Plan:

◆ Develop Common Data Base:

Contract with U.C. Chico to develop a common database for federal, state and local watershed funding sources with links to other resources.

Note: The contract was awarded in late August 2000 and the data base project has been initiated

◆ Provide Technical Assistance

Provide additional technical assistance for regional needs will be provided in the ensuing year from grants to the non-profit For Sake of Salmon to hire three regional coordinators.

Note: The contract was awarded in August 2000 and candidates are being selected.

◆ Research and Develop Universal Performance Measures

Initiate research towards development of universal performance measures through a contract with U.C. Davis. Analyze existing performance measures

Note: The contract was awarded in September 2000

◆ Provide funding for watershed coordinators.

One time funding has been approved for the following:

- ◆ A grant program for watershed coordinators to be hired by resource conservation districts. Public meetings were conducted in August and September for input. The grant program is being developed.
- ◆ A watershed coordinator to develop a regional coalition in the South Central Coast. The contract has been approved and the
- ◆ A watershed coordinator for the Carmel River Watershed Council has been funded and interviews will be held in the fall, 2000.
- ◆ Prioritize and Implement Refined Recommendations The Best Funding Practices identified and background issues have strong support by the Watershed Work Group. A series of recommendations are proposed based on these issues. It is recognized that the recommendations will require further refinement by agencies to address feasibility and develop priorities. Key agency staff will meet within a finite time period (6 months) to implement the recommendations.

Recommendations:

Note: The following recommendations are subject to prioritization and further refinement

- 1) Within 5 years, all major funding programs will utilize a common proposal format and selection process which includes pre-proposals.
- 2) Develop a common project database.
- 3) Agencies will incorporate common requirements for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and data base entry in funding documents.
- 4) Each major funding program will develop a checklist for applicants to help ascertain applicant capacity and eligibility.
- 5) Major funding programs will coordinate funding schedules as allowable and coordinate efforts to identify funding priorities.
- 6) Agencies will host collaborative workshops to provide training and funding information for potential applicants.

More Efficient Administration of Funds

- 7) Agencies will work towards a more timely release of funds and provide information on fund release schedules to allow applicants to plan accordingly.
- 8) Provide mechanism for funding up-front costs and/or advance payments when allowable.
- 9) Technical Assistance for Administration:
 - A. Assist recipients in developing good project management.
 7. Applicants pool resources to hire and share needed administrative expertise.
 8. Allow for funding of administrative and management costs of the project.
- 10) Develop one common (electronic) project database.

Accurate and Comprehensive Reporting and Accountability

- A. Develop common standard performance measures for watershed projects which allow for compilation and analysis of project data.

Provide Technical Assistance and Outreach

- B. Provide regional workshops for providing funding information and promoting collaboration among and with applicants.

Target outreach efforts to meet needs of audience.

- C. Provide training opportunities for agency staffs that utilize interagency resources and private expertise.

Address Regional and Economic Differences

- D. Ensure that there is sufficient staff to assist in all regions of the state including Central and Southern California.
- E. Include local and/or regional review as a primary step in making funding decisions.

Ensure funding decisions are based on sound science

- F. Require technical review of applications.

Ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

Leverage Multiple Funding Sources

- G. Encourage public/ private partnerships in funding.

Educate key policy makers

18) Produce public relations documents:

- A. Succinct brochure to explain concept and benefits of the watershed management approach.
 - Produce portfolio highlighting a variety of successful watershed management case studies.

- A. Conduct public forums and meetings targeting policy makers.

Identify Funding Gaps

- B. Identify funding gaps and seek federal, state, local and private funding.

INTRODUCTION

Watersheds – They are variable living landscapes and a topographic product of time. They are characterized by complicated interrelationships between biotic, physical, and chemical processes, and social communities. And, they are the source-- and the filter-- for most of the water supply that has shaped the history and economic development of California. It is the health of our watersheds that ultimately will support the incredible diversity of life and culture that makes California unique.

California currently does not have a statewide strategy for watershed management. There is a critical need to develop a framework that can support the hundreds of existing watershed groups across the state. This framework however, cannot sacrifice the inherent diversity and locally driven processes.

"It is critical that we develop a state framework for watershed management and protection to clarify expectations and provide coordination among the many distinct efforts.

Mary Nichols, Secretary for Resources

Management programs must be aware of the watershed system as a whole, and determine how we can preserve natural diversity while continuing to use these areas as places where people build their homes and their lives. The foundation of watershed management lies in principles of local involvement, integrated science, and coordination of multiple jurisdictions and plans to restore watershed health.

Shaping the Framework – Addressing Critical Issues

This is the first of a series of documents produced by the California Biodiversity Council Watershed Work Group to shape this framework. These documents will provide background information, identify and analyze key issues, and recommend short and long term solutions.

California Biodiversity Council Watershed Work Group

The California Biodiversity Council (CBC) is a forum of Federal, State, and local representatives whose purpose is to develop strategies and integrate policies for conserving biodiversity (see Appendix). At the March 11, 1999 meeting of the California Biodiversity Council, Secretary Nichols formed the CBC Watershed Work Group (WWG)

The mission of the CBC Watershed Work Group, as charged by the CBC, is to facilitate watershed restoration and conservation through coordination of statewide projects, policies, and support of local efforts.

The CBC WWG was further charged with the following:

- ◆ Provide a forum for discussing trends in watershed management, exchanging information and coordinating policies.
- ◆ Advise the Resources Agency, Cal EPA (State Water Resources Control Board) and other agencies on development of a “Watershed Agenda”.
- ◆ Assess and make recommendations on the following issues:
 - 1) Coordinating watershed restoration funding
 - 2) Establishing points of contact between agencies and watershed groups – i.e. establish watershed teams
 - 3) Addressing barriers to effective local watershed management, such as permitting and project liability.

Co-chaired by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the California Resources Agency, the WWG is a forum for an inclusive representation of watershed interests to develop creative solutions to crosscutting issues. Participants were selected to represent a broad spectrum of non-government and government entities, a widespread geographical range, and a range of participation in watershed efforts (see list of participants in appendix). A series of interactive discussions were held (see Methodology) to exchange perspectives and focus the issues. The Watershed Work Group initially developed a set of Watershed Principles. (see appendix).

Funding – The First Priority

Why an initial focus on funding? The level of funding for watershed restoration is increasing along with the interest. Proposition 12 and 13, along with targeted Federal funds have focused increasing attention on watershed management, paralleled by increased participation by the Legislature and groups such as the Regional Council of Rural Counties. With over 40 significant funding programs, what is emerging is a confusing web of funding sources, rules and processes. This is creating difficulties in the application and delivery of funds, resulting in confusion and frustration on the part of very dedicated and talented participants. There are opportunities to improve the funding decisions and delivery process with the end result being more effective watershed programs.

Guiding Principles for Watershed Funding

The discussion of funding watershed projects is based on the following key concepts and overall principles

1. Ensure that funding decisions are based on sound science
2. Expedite process to deliver funding
3. Local involvement
4. Incorporate monitoring evaluation system to ensure accountability and demonstrate program accomplishments.
5. Coordinate and leverage funding sources to maximize effectiveness.

Best Funding Practices in Watershed Funding

The following funding issues and recommendations were derived from a series of public meetings with the CBC WWG. Best Funding Practices, or BFPs, are those actions and practices related to funding that are most likely to facilitate watershed restoration. The

Watershed Workgroup represents a diverse audience of government and nongovernment agencies, landowners, industry and other representatives from throughout the State.

BFP # 1
A STREAMLINED APPLICATION/SELECTION PROCESS

Agencies that provide funding to local groups for watershed restoration and management activities typically set up an application and selection process for distributing those funds. The process often includes establishing a set of rules and procedures for submitting an application, and establishing a set of criteria for evaluating those applications. Most often, the process is internal and program-driven – i.e. the rules and procedures are set up to meet legislative, agency and programmatic requirements, with little consideration given for coordinating the process with other agencies and programs. Federal statutes and other enabling legislation often dictate the grant procedures. In addition, multiple funding sources, each with a different administrative mandate, can make it difficult to coordinate. For example, the State Water Resources Control Board had ten different fund programs identified in the recently passed Proposition 13.

While the trend toward more funding for watershed management is positive, the configuration of multiple agencies, missions, authorities, objectives, programs, policies, and processes has resulted in a duplication of funding efforts and conflicting processes. Some departments are recognizing this situation. The Department of Conservation coordinates with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the State Water Resources Control Board to coordinate the requests they receive for Resource Conservation District funding proposals. The State Coastal Conservancy and the Department of Fish and Game are starting to coordinate the coastal watershed/salmonid requests, and plan to formalize this procedure in a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Application Process – Keep It Simple

Each agency (and often department) issues a separate procedure for applying for funds, with varying schedules set up for submitting proposals and notification of grant awards. The procedures often require an applying organization to develop a detailed application or proposal with extensive accompanying background material specific to that agency. Each of the agency procedures can require a different format, accompanying data specific to that agency's objectives, and often a different emphasis.

Organizations applying for funds often reformat similar project proposals and apply to multiple funding sources for the same (or directly related) project. It can be a "hit-or-miss" effort that requires a significant investment in preparing many proposals in different formats – all in the attempt to get one specific project funded by one specific funding source. Many organizations do not have the staffing required to research and complete these multiple proposals.

It is key that the grass-roots community understand the funding process. It is also important that this process be timely and responsive to local needs.

-Jonathan Berkey, Watershed Work Group

Case Study: Use of Electronic Database for Submitting Proposals under USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Background:

Applicants submitting proposals to establish Geographic Priority Areas (GPAs) under USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) must submit their application electronically via the Web. Applications are solicited annually, and applicants are required to submit specific information such as priority resource objectives, practices to be installed, partnerships created, matching funding sources, and project outcomes. USDA uses this information to prioritize proposals for funding. Applicants are also offered an opportunity annually to revise existing proposals online, or submit new ones.

Benefit

Local Working Groups, by nature of the online proposal system, are required to go through a planning process in order to submit the proposal. The planning process includes identifying and prioritizing local resource concerns. The electronic nature of the proposal allows USDA to summarize the information easily, facilitates annual updates, and makes the information readily available to others.

Recommendations:

- 1) Within 5 years, all major funding programs will utilize a common pre-proposal or similar pre-assessment. Preproposals will be screened for potential inter and intra-agency collaboration to increase efficiencies. As a first step, working through the California Resources Agency and U.C. Davis, agencies will identify common elements and then develop a common format for these elements.
- 2) A common project database will be developed using NRPI as a model. Applicants and Agencies will use this database to enter project proposal information electronically and to draw from in selecting projects for funding. The database will be linked to other databases, such as NRPI. Additional information specific to the agency or entity may also be required.
- 3) Agencies will incorporate common requirements for monitoring, evaluation, and data base entry in the RFPs or other funding documents.

Is It A Good Fit?

There are fundamental questions which applicants must consider when assessing whether to pursue a funding source. A list of questions in the form of a checklist (specific to each program) would assist in this process. The checklist will include the most commonly asked questions and considerations. This is a customer-friendly format. Examples of questions would be:

- 1) Is your organization able to front the costs of the project? Reimbursement will take an average of (days/months).
- 2) Can you wait _____ months before starting the project?
- 3) Do you have the capacity to comply with reporting/accounting requirements?

The Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Program currently uses this type of checklist.

Recommendation:

- 4) Each funder develops an initial checklist for use by the potential applicant to help ascertain if they want to pursue the grant.

Using a Pre-Proposal

Organizations spend large amounts of time preparing project proposals, only to find that the project does not meet the initial guidelines or criteria of the program. Some agencies and interagency programs are using or considering use of proposals. The pre-proposal is a process for submitting project ideas and concepts, using minimal up-front time, in order to 1) strengthen or screen out further proposal development and/or 2) direct a project to another more appropriate funding source(s). In a pre-proposal, an applicant would typically be required to briefly describe the project. Certain criteria would then be applied in order to screen the project into different categories and match it up with the most appropriate funding agency and program. After the initial screening, the project would then be developed in more detail (e.g. scope and tasks), with guidance provided by the agency most likely to provide funding. The use of pre-proposals allows groups to receive technical assistance, in advance, for determining direction in project development, outreach, education, monitoring and training. Pre-proposals avoid a large initial investment in time and effort to applicants prior to determining the eligibility of projects.

Case Study: Use of Pre-Proposals in Wetlands Development Grants**Background:**

The Wetlands Development Grants are issued from USEPA to the states. Region 9 (which includes California) has chosen to institute pre-proposals. The California program is administered by the Resources Agency. The pre-proposal criteria (in narrative form) are sent to interested parties with the same deadline used by other states for the application including a limitation of two pages in length. All pre-proposals are initially reviewed and ranked by the Agency for merit and consistency with Agency policies. In some cases, a number of similar pre-proposals on the same subject have been sent back with a request to combine them or individual pre-proposals are sent back to be revised. They are then forwarded with the ranking to USEPA. A project manager is then assigned who reviews the pre-proposals and if they have merit, works with the applicant to develop the full application. In 1999-2000 there were 75 pre-proposals submitted, of which 36 were asked to develop the application.

Benefit

Both Federal and State participants agree that this procedure has benefited the program by resulting in more professional proposals. The initial work up front to solicit and screen the pre-proposals is well worth the effort, as it results in less work in reviewing ineligible and/or poorly written lengthy applications. There is potential for further interagency and intra-agency collaboration in the initial screening by the two state agencies. An added benefit is the greater individual relationship and technical assistance provided by USEPA. They are much more familiar with the application when they finally receive it, after working closely with the applicant.

When funding is available, the Department of Water Resources, Urban Streams Program currently sends out a notice to local agencies and organizations, which

includes a pre-application checklist, and encourages interested parties to call Program staff to discuss potential projects. We have informally allowed people to send in a brief project summary for staff review and feedback. We also provide feedback upon request to applicants on how to improve unsuccessful applications or where to go for more appropriate sources of funding

Timing is Everything – especially for the Matchmakers and Groundbreakers!

The different schedules imposed by different funding sources affect an organization's ability to leverage funds and coordinate work efforts. Many grantors now require matching funds be verified before an application is approved. Often, the source of these matching funds is other grants (including federal and/or state). With varying deadlines and notification schedules for each grant or program, it is often impossible to package a project that includes multiple funding sources.

Funding cycles must also be coordinated with seasonal needs of the work. For example, a project may require major earthwork to be completed prior to the rainy season. If funding does not come through until after the rains begin, the project may be delayed sufficiently to affect its success

Another element affected by timing is the ability to obtain laborers to complete a project. Timely notification from funding sources is important in order to secure subcontractors for seasonal work. A project that is funded by several separate small grants requires extensive coordination amongst the various funding sources in order to pay subcontractors at the time they are needed.

Recommendation:

5) Agencies communicate regarding funding schedules and cycles to facilitate coordination. The procedures for matching fund requirements will be clearly stated including the eligibility of other grants as matching funds. Where there is flexibility, increase the ability to use in-kind (also known as "soft") matching funds.

Making Government Programs and Funding Requirements More Understandable

Granting procedures often make use of a large number of government terms and acronyms and assume public knowledge of their internal administrative structure. This puts applicants at a disadvantage if they are not familiar with these terms and procedures. Additional "user friendly" materials should be produced. Some of the lack of understanding of government programs is due to the lack of internal coordination within an agency.

In addition, lack of understanding of a program can lead to ill feelings. One watershed group did not understand how or why they were not included as a priority watershed for the 319 grants. Others felt resentful because they thought they had been excluded from being eligible to respond to a request for proposals when this was not the case.

Collaborative Workshops

Public workshops to explain the grant programs have proven very beneficial for a number of reasons. The Department of Fish and Game hosts approximately 6

workshops for the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. The DFG staff explains and highlights nuances in the grants, address common questions and also provide a forum for local groups to give a short presentation on their program. Thus, the meetings also promote formal and informal networking. Applicants can receive personalized assistance. The meetings ensure more cost-effective use of DFG staff time by helping proponents avoid pitfalls and develop better quality proposals. The SWRCB offers similar workshops for the 319(h) program.

Recently, the DFG and SWRCB promoted each other's workshops in their literature. Another example of providing useful coordination tools for the public is the practice of the 319(h) and 205(j) grant programs in informing applicants of numerous other grant programs as well. This idea has merit. There are greater efficiencies for both the agencies and the public by combining notices and meetings.

Teaming up with a private entity can also result in more buy-in and greater attendance. A joint meeting held by the Department of Conservation and the California Cattlemen's Association drew 300 attendees.

Another successful strategy is to host a half or full day training session in conjunction with annual meetings of the trade associations. For example, the Department of Conservation and the State Water Resources Control Board provided a joint training session on grant applications for both the Resources Conservation District and 319 grant programs the day prior to the 1999 annual meeting of the Resource Conservation Districts. The joint sponsorship also increased attendance. The Department of Conservation also held a training session prior to the conference sponsored by the Great Valley Center.

Recommendation:

- 6) Agencies will host collaborative workshops to explain funding program requirements and application procedures. Agencies will jointly advertise and provide support for the collaborative workshops.

BFP # 2
MORE EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDS

Show Me the Money!

Once an RFP or similar document announcing a grant has been released, it often takes 16 months to go through the process of accepting completed RFP's, reviewing and deciding on successful applicants, writing and signing the resulting contract before funds are available for release. The SWRCB has a detailed chart that shows this procedure in the guidelines for the 319 programs.

This time schedule needs to be considered when applicants apply for funds and are dependent on seasonal cycles for weather, instream permit restrictions, etc. It can also affect an organization's ability to collaborate on projects. If funds are not released at the projected time, a grantee may not be available to work with other groups already lined up on the project.

The SWRCB was able to streamline their process with the 319(h) USEPA funded grants to provide better customer service. The Board informs awarded applicants of their status as soon as the applications are ranked while simultaneously proceeding with obtaining authorization from (USEPA) for expenditure. Previously, they waited until the authorization was approved. The greatest delay is in writing the contracts with the applicants. There are a number of revisions. The SWRCB has revised their system to assign a project manager either at the field (regional board) level for local project or at the state level for statewide projects. This person follows the application procedure from start to finish and thus is familiar with the project and can provide valuable assistance in developing the actual contract when that stage takes effect. In addition, the SWRCB has a team of contracts, administrative, and budget expertise to review the proposal in the initial stages in order to reduce later revisions.

As mentioned earlier, watershed restoration work often has seasonal restrictions for operational reasons and to protect the resource. This means that the work needs to be ready to go at the start of the permitted time period to assure adequate time for completion. For example, instream activities needed for a salmon habitat restoration project on the north coast may be limited by permit the period between July 15 through October 1. Proposals are often written based on the need to start and complete work within that time frame. Delays in receiving funds can result in a project not being completed on time and project costs escalating.

Recommendations:**Processing applications**

7)

- a) Agencies should clarify the time frame for the processing of applications and releasing of funds (similar to the time schedule provided by the SWRCB).
- b) Agencies should examine their current application process and identify if additional resources are needed to help ensure as timely a release of funds as possible to the applicants.
- c) Applicants should consider the time frame provided by the agency and plan accordingly from the beginning of the process regarding any restrictions and coordination needed.

Money Now or Money Later - The problems with obtaining payments.

Funds are often paid to recipient organizations on a reimbursement basis. This results in fiscal hardship for some organizations that do not have the fund reserves and fiscal ability to provide large up-front costs for projects that have been approved for funding. A delay in reimbursement can cause fiscal hardships and may affect the successful completion of a project. In addition, many smaller organizations are forced into a situation of borrowing money in order to pay for a project funded by reimbursements.

Currently two Federal Agencies, the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service have a process to allow for a 30-day advance on certain expenditures.

Recommendations:

8) Payment – Advance and Reimbursable

- a) Research the potential for Agencies to provide limited advance payment of project funds.
- b) Agencies assure prompt payment of reimbursable funds. Agencies allow grant recipients to submit requests for payment on quarterly or more frequent basis.

Who's Going to Manage and Administer the Project?

Project management and administrative capacity is key to a successful project.

Management functions include tracking multiple funding sources, scheduling, managing human resources, managing risk, budgeting, procurement, and contracting. An investment in project management and administration is critical to ensure that a project stays on track and meets its intended objectives. Project management support should be balanced by an investment in “on the ground” work – i.e. spending dollars on those tasks or project components that directly achieve the project objectives. In other words, there should be sufficient, but not excessive funding allowed for project administration. Both the funding agency and the recipient of the funds are responsible for assuring that a project is developed and managed efficiently in order to use the greatest percentage of funds for “on the ground” work.

Agencies should provide project funds, technical assistance, and an infrastructure to support management functions. Agencies should also investigate the possibility of using common reporting procedures.

Recommendations:

- 9) Agencies ensure that sufficient, but not excessive, administrative and management costs are made available to the project including bookkeeping and accounting activities. Indirect costs should be allowable expenses.

10) Technical Assistance for Administration

- a) Grant recipients develop good project management skills in order to manage projects efficiently and effectively. Agencies can support this goal through training and technical assistance (including technical assistance grants).
- b) Applicants pool resources to hire and share needed administrative expertise. RCDs and other local entities may act as fiscal agents for multiple grants/watershed projects.

- 11) Develop one common project database, such as NRPI (Natural Resources Projects Inventory). Information will be submitted electronically and will be available to parties electronically.

BFP # 3 PROVIDE ACCURATE AND COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Federal, State, local, and private entities are focusing on the need to provide increased funding for watersheds. However, this focused attention has also led to more scrutiny and questions as to how, where and how well the funding is being allocated. This information is critical to establishing the credibility for future funding.

The California Legislature and Congress demand summaries of funded projects through annual reports, including a quantitative summary and analysis of the projects and completed work. Without compatible performance measures, one cannot summarize and evaluate the success of projects watershed. This information can also be used to identify funding gaps.

Performance Measures for Completed Projects

There are currently no universally accepted performance measures available to capture the results of a project. However, the Natural Resource Project Inventory (NRPI) includes certain performance data elements, and groups are encouraged to enter this information on their watershed projects. The SWRCB has also developed a reporting system that is very detailed for grant recipients.

Lack of Consistency in Reporting

Performance measures are only useful if the information is collected and reported. The State of Oregon mandates collection of this information as a provision of the grant and has 100% compliance. Different funding agencies in California encourage funding recipients to complete the NRPI form; some require it as part of the agreement to receive funding. Even with this provision, some groups have stated it is difficult to find the time to complete the forms.

Recommendation:

- 12) Examine existing quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) procedures used by agencies (such as SWRCB, NRCS, DWR). Develop common standard performance measures for watershed programs and projects. There is currently no universal performance measurement system. A universal system of quantifiable performance measures will allow agencies, the Legislature and other parties to evaluate the extent

and cumulative effectiveness of watershed funding efforts. This will provide input to future funding decisions. Current performance measures used by agencies should be assessed and a universal system (or as an alternative, a template) be developed which incorporates the flexibility needed for local and regional variables. These measures will be developed through a multi-agency approach including NRPI, CalFed, environmental indicators and others. Agencies are also encouraged to coordinate data collection and analysis.

BFP # 4**PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH TO WATERSHED GROUPS, LANDOWNERS AND OTHER GRANT APPLICANTS.**Providing Help to Local Watershed Groups

There is a need for technical assistance for local watershed groups in almost every area of project development and implementation. In fact, one of the issues facing funding agencies is the often poor quality of project proposals. Many organizations and groups have the need for technical field assistance to develop viable proposals to meet a specific grant.

Agencies that provide technical assistance during the initial development of a project proposal usually see substantial results in the form of better project proposals. These agency staff assisting local groups applying for funds can save time and effort by advising the recipient organizations on the viability and type of projects as they are being designed. They can also help grant applicants maximize their chances of receiving grants. An example of the kind of technical assistance needed in project development is helping a group assess the natural resource problems and opportunities within a watershed.

One example of an outreach program is found in the Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Program. This program has traditionally provided slide shows for local communities to help them understand the Program and the types of projects that can receive funding. A handout entitled "Money for Creeks" is also available which lists multiple funding sources. Staff also gives periodic presentations at conferences.

"Often, there is a temptation to leap to a discussion of solutions when there has been no agreement on a common set of objectives or a definition of the problem."

- Watershed Work Group

Responding to Funding Opportunities

A critical aspect of a successful funding program is the capacity to respond in a timely and professional manner to funding opportunities. The myriad of funding programs necessitates an understanding of the individual government requirements, the staffing capacity to respond, and the technical ability to identify and develop the appropriate projects. Many watershed groups are non-profit or low budget organizations that do not

have the luxury of adequate staff to respond to the funding programs as most of the staffing capacity is devoted to program implementation. In addition, groups often require assistance to interpret and understand the specific requirements of the government entities.

There needs to be an increased sensitivity to the fact that many non-government personnel are not familiar with the process and/or terms used in watershed planning (and funding). This was a repeated theme by the WWG. Repeated use (without explanation) of government jargon, acronyms and references to processes can alienate an audience, and certainly will not result in the involvement and feedback needed.

A frustration voiced by some participants was the lack of coordination among agencies. Often groups requesting assistance had to pursue different departments individually for assistance on the same project, departments did not communicate within the same department or with other departments.

Some agencies (see below) provide public workshops for potential grant applicants. They are offered regionally to allow for more participation. An added benefit of these workshops is to interact and develop collaborative agreements which can promote cost sharing, provide additional sources of labor needed, provide match requirements, and promote regional planning of projects.

Some successful examples of this assistance are:

6. Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (DFG)

DFG provides a series of public workshops throughout the geographic area eligible for funding. DFG took the initiative with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to offer workshops in CCC facilities and include the CCC and other agencies (such as NRCS talking about the EQUIP program). This has proven very successful.

- **“Prop 204” Watershed Grants (SWRCB)**

The SWRCB also offers regional workshops to provide assistance to applicants.

A recent decision by the SWRCB and DFG to jointly conduct public workshops is an example of a step in the right direction. This increases efficiency for both the agencies and the applicants.

Field assistance to develop proposals

Providing technical assistance to watershed groups to identify and develop project proposals has proven very beneficial to both applicants and agencies.

Case Studies:

- California Coastal Conservancy (CC)-
The CC staff works closely with interested parties to assess and develop projects. The staff responds to inquiries initiated by potential applicants and/or seeks out potential projects for funding. The ensuing steps involve field assistance in reviewing and developing the proposal
- Department of Fish and Game (Fisheries Restoration Program)-
DFG requires a field review as part of the application process for the Fisheries Restoration Program. Field staff work closely with potential applicants in

reviewing proposed projects on site, advising on initial merit, and making suggestions for improving the proposal.

- **USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service-**
USDA-NRCS provides assistance to local working groups in preparing proposals for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Geographic Priority Areas (GPAs). This assistance includes helping local working groups identify resource problems and solutions, and project activities. In addition, under other NRCS programs, such as the Small Watershed Program (PL83-566), NRCS provides a multidisciplinary watershed planning team to work directly with local watershed groups. This interdisciplinary planning team works with local landowners, governments and stakeholders to develop a watershed plan that is then implemented using USDA and other sources of funds.

Training

Training is critical to increasing the capacity of watershed groups, private landowners, and others to develop projects and respond to other funding opportunities. The WWG meetings highlighted the fact that many agencies have expertise in these areas that should be combined. The DFG Watershed Academy is an example of a well received technical training program that incorporates other agency personnel. This successful program should expand joint sponsorship of design and delivery of training programs.

Recommendation:

- 13) Agencies should collaborate with public and private entities to provide regional workshops for potential funding applicants to address common technical and administrative questions. The workshops should provide a forum to maximize the opportunities for potential applicants to collaborate with each other and with the agencies.

Develop and design outreach efforts that take into account the following:

- Schedules and locations of participants
- User –friendly workshop and materials and accessible personnel
- Individual consultation when needed

- 14) Provide interagency, collaborative training opportunities for staff.

Outreach and Stakeholder Buy-In

Outreach programs are critical to ensuring that participants, especially landowners and community groups, are informed of the funding programs and procedures. The logistics and format in providing outreach efforts are critical to the success of any outreach effort. The outreach presenters need to meet the needs of the targeted audience. The most successful outreach efforts have been where presenters have gone to meetings and gathering initiated by the groups (town hall meetings, clubs, etc).

"The most rewarding and challenging part of my job is working with the landowners and managers within the watershed. I firmly believe that the local watershed working groups can not be successful without the landowners. The best way to ensure their participation is to include them from the beginning of the project. If the landowners feel included from the start, then they won't feel as though someone, particularly an agency, is trying to pull something over on them. The landowners that I have met and work with know more about their land than any agency personnel. Having their participation will only improve as well as ensure completion of the project. Don't ever underestimate the knowledge and value of landowner buy-in and participation."

Nettie R. Drake, Coordinator, Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed CRMP

Targeted outreach efforts require additional staff time. However, this investment is returned in greater support and involvement by stakeholders and in many cases addressing problems before they escalate and require even greater personnel commitment.

Recommendation:

- 15) Develop and design outreach efforts that take into account the following:
- a) Schedules and locations of participants
 - b) User –friendly workshop and materials and accessible personnel
 - c) Individual consultation when needed

BFP # 5

ADDRESS REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

There are significant differences between types, needs, goals etc. of watershed projects in different regions of the State. Some of the more dramatic differences occur between the large, unpopulated timbered areas of Northern California with heavy rainfall, the open rangeland and rolling hills of Central California and the more arid, heavily populated areas of Southern California. Funding programs however, are often designed to apply to the entire state and are evaluated using statewide basis.

Economic Impact/Land Use

The health of a watershed directly affects the economic base of a community. This ranges from the commercial fishing operations in Northwest, the farmers in the San Joaquin Valley and the urban dweller in San Diego. There is increasing pressure to include economic impacts when designing and evaluating funding programs.

Geographic Range:

The range of the watershed should be defined functionally. For example, the watershed encompassing Los Angeles and much of California includes Mono Lake as the water source. The Coachella Valley is dependent on the Colorado River. The Sacramento River watershed encompasses much of the Central Valley.

Need Sufficient Assistance Throughout the State

Some members voiced that the majority of watershed funding is directed to Northern California. The funding review committees consist of a majority of members from Northern California, and the majority of submitted funded projects come from that area of the state. There is also more technical assistance for watershed project development available in Northern California.

Unique programs to Southern California

The programs in urbanized areas of Southern California are not always widely recognized as watershed related program. One example is a program in Los Angeles to conserve water, and minimize runoff. This includes maximizing permeable surfaces to absorb the water and enhance the water table. This is an excellent example of a collaborative program involving the City, non-profit groups such as The Tree People, and others.

Value of regional staff involvement in funding programs

Funding decisions are often based on centralized committees made up of a majority of members from Northern California and/or Headquarters. The WWG strongly feels that regional staffs who are familiar and knowledgeable with the area should play a pivotal role in these decisions.

Recommendation:

16) Ensure that there are sufficient staffs to assist in all regions of the state. Central and Southern California were identified as needing additional staff. Staff will assist with program training, project design and other technical assistance. Review current and future funding programs and incorporate regional needs into each program's approval process.

Provide interagency and public/private training regional training opportunities for Watershed groups/fund applicants to address capacity needs.

17) Include local and/or regional review as a primary step in making funding decisions (if an agency has field staff).

BFP #6

ENSURE FUNDING DECISIONS ARE BASED ON SOUND SCIENCE

The credibility and effectiveness of watershed management projects is dependent on ensuring that the project is based on sound science. This includes review by technical advisors in agencies (preferably inter-agency) and peer review.

Since various agencies have differing areas of expertise, an interagency pooled expertise approach should be promoted. An example is the North Coast Watershed Assessment that includes scientists from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of Fish and Game and the Department of Conservation (Division of Mines and Geology). Peer review also adds additional expertise from both the private and public sector.

The Department of Fish and Game grant allocation process for the Fisheries Restoration and the Coastal Salmon Recovery Program both require an internal technical review and

also a review by public and private entities with additional expertise (including fisheries groups, water agencies, and watershed practitioners).

One word of caution, however. It is important to address potential conflict of interest as grant applications are reviewed by the entities that also can benefit from receiving the funding. The Citizens Advisory Committee formed to review the Department of Fish and Game's Fisheries Restoration Program specifically states that Committee members may not submit applications for funding.

Recommendation:

- 18) Require technical review of funding proposals. Encourage this review to be interdisciplinary and also include members of the private sector and other organizations as appropriate.

Ensure that there is no conflict of interest by the review team(s).

BFP #7

LEVERAGE MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES

There is a multitude of funding options available to local watershed groups seeking watershed management and restoration funding. As more funding becomes available, it is increasingly difficult for local groups to track the various sources, processes, schedules and other requirements of each funding source. This includes both public and private sources of funds.

Private Funds are Underutilized...

Many watershed groups are unaware of private funding sources and rely on the better publicized traditional public funding resources (e.g. Cal EPA Section 319 grants, DF&G Fisheries Restoration Grants, NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program grants, and others). Agencies themselves tend to focus on their own programs and often do not encourage the inclusion of private sources into a project's development.

Case Study: Leveraging Public and Private sources through USDA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Background:

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program utilizes conservation easements and cost sharing to provide incentives for landowners to conserve their natural resources. There is a requirement under the program for state government to match a portion of the federal contributions. The source of these state matching funds can be state legislated appropriations or private sources passed through state government.

Benefit

Private sources of funds can be used to enhance public programs.

Recommendations:

- 19) Agencies encourage public-private partnerships, including leveraging public and private funds. Research the availability of private funding resources and advertise through a common Website. Agencies work with major private foundations and environmental consortia of private foundations to encourage outreach to local

watershed groups and training in applying for funds. Encourage participation by private foundations in the CBC's Watershed Work Group and other funding discussions

BF

P # 8

EDUCATE KEY POLICY MAKERS ON THE MERITS OF WATERSHED PLANNING

Many persons in management, legislative and policy arenas do not fully understand the concept of watersheds and the importance of a watershed approach to making sound and balanced environmental policy decisions. This includes top and middle management of public agencies, legislators and legislative staff. Most people are more comfortable with quantifiable data regarding water quantity and quality than the nuances of a community based forum looking at a myriad of interrelated biological, sociological and economic factors in a geographic range determined by topography and hydrology. This lack of understanding is manifested in a lack of support ranging from skepticism to a more blatant condemnation. Yet when community opposition arises to a program and/or policy decision, it is the relationships and inclusive processes established through long-term watershed planning that proves invaluable for successfully addressing and mitigating these concerns. The different potential for success is obvious between presenting a controversial issue as a stranger to a collection of persons with little or no history of effective problem solving versus working closely with members of a group who know each other through constructive formal and informal forums around common concerns.

Recommendations:

20) Produce public relations documents:

Succinct brochure to explain concept and benefits of the watershed management Approach

Produce portfolio highlighting a variety of successful watershed management case studies

21) Conduct public forums and meetings to educated legislative, management and policy makers.

BFP #9 IDENTIFYING AND FILLING FUNDING GAPS

As agencies assess their role in watershed management and the strategies they will take to enhance watershed activities, it is important to not only ascertain the current funding availability, but also the areas that are not addressed sufficiently. Some of these have been addressed in discussions presented earlier. The following list represents funding gaps identified by the Watershed Work Group (not listed in any specific order)

- **Multi-species approaches**

Projects that are broader than single-species focus – e.g. riparian restoration, invasives and non-native species eradication

- **Unlisted species**
This category often falls between the cracks. This is also a good preventative measure.
- **Protection of pristine and other high quality areas**
Watershed groups typically can't get funding until there's a problem.
- **Environmental education**
Environmental education regarding watersheds covers all the disciplines. It is also critical to raising awareness and expanding a constituency, and is an effective method of reaching all the generations.
- **Monitoring**
Monitoring is critical to the evaluating the success of a program, and is often not included in funding (especially baseline monitoring).
- **Research**
Research is critical to ensure a sound science-based approach, and to keep pace with changes in methodology and information.
- **Planning**
Watershed plans are increasingly a mandated part of watershed restoration projects. Effective planning is time consuming and costly. Assistance is needed in this area.
- **Watershed group capacity**
Coordinators and other technical assistance capacity for watershed groups.
- **Agency capacity**
To implement programs in the field and in contract/grants administration.
- **Long Term Operation and Maintenance**
On going operation and maintenance of projects once they are funded.

Considerations when looking at funding gaps

- There tends to be an emphasis in government programs towards more implementation and less education or monitoring.
- Agency funding should be partly allocated for technical assistance to local groups.
- Development costs are hard to fund (includes research, grant writing, design, scope of work, contract negotiation).
- Funding should support incentives for good land use practices
- Agency grants/assistance staff need full support of their agencies. Agencies should recognize that many local groups could carry out agency mandates professionally and cost effectively.
- Get downstream beneficiaries of good land management to pay for that management. Apply principle to multiple scales.
- Small groups need training or help in administration, financial, legal, employer issues. (e.g. bidding, contracting)
- Operation costs should include meeting and conference attendance, regional coordination meetings, equipment, and computers.
- Need financial assistance to subsidize stakeholder participation.
- Need source of funding for permit filing fees.
- Science/research is typically excluded from agency programs. The assumption is that agencies know how to get the information. Need good protocols for monitoring.
- Need to provide funding and training for qualified watershed coordinators

<p>Case study: long term contracting with landowners</p>

Background:

USDA implements several of its programs (including EQIP, WHIP and its PL-566 small watershed program) by entering into long term contracts (LTCs) with landowners. The LTC, a legal and binding contract, allows annually appropriated funds to be made available to landowners over a longer time frame in order to facilitate more reasonable implementation schedules. In addition, the LTC obligates landowners to maintain their practices over a longer time frame. Under the LTC, landowners must sign a 5-10 year contract with USDA using a conservation plan as the "record of decision" document. The conservation plan outlines what practices will be installed when. The LTC specifies the cost share amount to be provided by USDA.

Benefit

The Long Term Contract (LTC) obligates funds that are appropriated annually but allows landowners to actually install the various conservation practices over a longer time frame. The LTC also establishes a commitment on the part of the agency to provide specific resources to conservation work being done over several years, and on the part of the landowner, to install and maintain specific practices over several years. This allows for better monitoring, assessment of cumulative effects, establishing performance measures, and more efficient administration of funds. The LTC also requires agencies to provide continued technical assistance over the life of the contract. While at first glance the LTC may seem rigid, it can actually be modified according to mutually agreed-to changes in the conservation plan and/or changes in costs. This provides for landowner flexibility.

Recommendation:

- 22) Seek federal, state, local and private funding to fill the gaps identified. Take agency actions (e.g. redirecting existing staff, priorities and goals) to strengthen the weak areas identified.

Progress to Date:

- **Contract with UC Davis (Information Center for the Environment) to research and develop common pre-proposal.**

This research will examine common fields in existing pre-proposal used by local, state and federal entities and the development of a form that could be universally applied. Research will include inquiries as to the best method of applying this tool to assist both applicants and funders. A potential pilot program among a limited number of agencies is also being drafted.

- **Watershed Coordinators**

The Resources Agency and the Department of Conservation promoted funding for Resource Conservation Districts to hire watershed coordinators. The Governor signed the 2000-2001 Budget that included \$2 million dollars for RCDs to hire watershed

coordinators. Public workshops will be held in August and early September 2000 to gather comments on the new program. The Department will finalize the new grant process with consideration of this input. It is anticipated that grant applications will be available in the fall of 2000 and finalizing the proposals (depending upon the number received) in the early spring of 2001.

- **Joint promotion and presentation of technical assistance workshops]**

The California Department of Fish and Game and the State Water Resources Control Board are collaborating in promoting technical assistance workshops and have initiated discussions on joint presentations.

- **Field Assistance to Develop Proposal**

In response to the need to address regional differences and also to provide technical assistance, the California Resources Agency has designated funding for regional coordinators.

- **Administrative/Grant Writing Assistance**

The California Resources Agency is providing funding through the organization For Sake of Salmon to help with capacity building and grant writing assistance for watershed groups.

- **Development of Funding Website Resource**

The Resources Agency is working with Cal State Chico, and in consultation with U.C. Davis to develop a website which will provide "one stop shopping" in researching funding sources. The potential applicant will be able to query a wide variety of subject areas, link to many funders and funding assistance sites and also provide other related linkages.

- **Development of watershed brochure**

The Resources Agency and CalFed are jointly developing a brochure that will outline the benefits of watershed management. Illustrative case studies will highlight and quantify these benefits.

Next Steps

- Obtain endorsement of issues by the California Biodiversity Council at the September 2000 meeting and support for addressing recommendations
- Convene a series of 3-4 meetings among key agency funding staff to further develop the recommendations
- Work with affected agencies regarding recommendations
- Continue to develop centralized funding site
- Provide additional technical assistance through grant to For Sake of Salmon

For more information, contact Nina Gordon, California Resources Agency
Nina@resources.ca.gov (916) 653-5656

APPENDIX

1. Watershed Principles (adopted by CBC)
2. List of participants
3. Partial list of funding programs
4. Acronyms
5. California Biodiversity Council - Background

GENERAL WATERSHED PRINCIPLES – Adopted by CBC

Comprehensiveness

- Consider whole drainage basin (headwaters to basin outlet)

- Address all significant factors affecting the resource(s)
- Use an ecosystem-based approach (address environmental, economic and social benefits)
- Recognize diversity of watershed in State
- Work across boundaries (land ownership/jurisdictional responsibilities)

Commitment and Leadership

- Get commitment and leadership from those who live and work in the watershed
- Provide State and regional management support and commitment
- Achieve a common vision and collective set of objectives at the watershed level

Process and Communication

- Recognize that process is important as outcome
- Use a stake-holder based process (inclusive from beginning to end)
- Provide for an on-going iterative process with many opportunities for input

Integration of Interdisciplinary Science and Local Knowledge

- Use the best available scientific information
- Incorporate local knowledge and common sense approach
- Acknowledge watershed assessments as a necessary first step

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

- Monitor outcomes (include social and technical components)
- Take long-term approach
- Adapt management based on monitoring results
- Provide for flexibility in the watershed assessment and monitoring approach

Cooperation and Coordination

- Foster local interest and participation
- Promote federal/State/local government/tribal/public/private partnerships
- Comply with existing laws
- Utilize a combination of voluntary and regulatory approaches
- Seek equitable ways to distribute responsibilities and funding

Community-based

- Emphasize local initiatives and energy while acknowledging larger public trust interests
- Do not employ a top-down approach
- Consider scale dependencies
- Recognize beneficial resource utilization

Funding Sources for Watershed and Wetland Protection

(Partial List)

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): The LWCF is revenue from outer continental shelf leases and royalties. Although the authorized level of funding annually is \$900 million, Congress appropriates much less for the acquisition of land for conservation by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Contact your Congressional Representative or regional office of any of the federal agencies for more specific information.

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants: Funds generated from excise taxes on sport fishing equipment and boat gasoline taxes are set aside in the Sport Fish and Restoration Account of the Aquatic Resources Fund for grants to state agencies for the acquisition, restoration, and enhancement of coastal wetlands systems. Grants are available to all coastal states and require a 50/50 match. Contact Chris McKay with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at (503) 231-6128 for an application. Deadline is in June.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA): NAWCA provides federal funds specifically to “conserve North American wetland ecosystems and waterfowl and the other migratory birds and fish and wildlife that depend on such habitats.” (PL 101-233) Eligible projects include acquisition and restoration of wetlands among other activities. Proposals require a 50/50 nonfederal match and are accepted twice a year in March and August. A small grants program is also available with a May 1 deadline. For an application, call (703) 358-1784.

Wetlands Reserve Program: Funds are available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of the 1996 Farm Bill for the acquisition of conservation easements on agricultural lands. For more information, contact Ron Schultze at (530) 792-5656 or Allan Forkey at (530) 792-5653 or the local National Resource Conservation Service office.

Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA)/Bureau of Reclamation: A variety of funding programs are available for the acquisition, restoration and study of wetlands and water resources in the Central Valley. Contact Chuck Solomon at the Bureau of Reclamation at (916) 978-5052. The Bureau of Reclamation also has a wetlands program with grant funding. Contact Bob Shaffer at (916) 414-6459.

CALFED Bay-Delta Program: The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is both state and federal agencies that have been charged with finding a solution to the long-standing water wars in the Delta. Ecosystem restoration is a major component of the program and over \$100 million has been allocated to date. For 2001 grant funds, RFP will be released on March 1, 2000. Proposals are due in May and decisions will be given October. Future RFPs will be released in January. Grants range in size from \$10,000 - \$2 million. Call Rebecca Fauver at (916) 654-1334 for more information.

Army Corps of Engineers/Sections 1135 & 206: Section 1135 funds are available for the restoration and acquisition of wetlands previously affected by an Army Corps project. For more information, contact the Army Corps of Engineers at (415) 977-8702. Section 206 funds provide for the restoration of aquatic ecosystem structure and function. Projects usually include the manipulation of the hydrology in and along bodies of water, including wetlands and riparian areas. No relationship to an existing Corps project is required. Contact Guy Brown at (916) 557-5270.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): EPA annually provides funding to support water quality protection and ecosystem restoration in California. Many of these funds are provided directly to the state designated water quality agency - the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs). A portion of these funds is then made available by the SWRCB/RWQCBs to other organizations to support community-based watershed activities. For more information on these funds that include nonpoint source implementation (CWA Section 319), water quality planning (CWA Section 205), and state revolving fund loans, please refer to the SWRCB. EPA also provides annual funding for watershed activities that protect, restore and enhance wetlands, and these funds are administered directly by EPA Region 9. Finally, EPA has numerous other funding sources that are often awarded through national selection processes that can support community based watershed activities. For information and contacts on these and related funding sources visit the EPA website at www.epa.gov/region09/funding.

Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers cost-share programs to restore and enhance wildlife habitats on private and enhance wetlands on private land. Call (916) 414-6446 for more information or visit <http://partners.fws.gov/index.htm>.

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS): Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for private landowners who want to develop or improve fish and wildlife habitat on their property. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the program, providing technical assistance and up to 75% of the cost of the project. NRCS also offers watershed planning services that may lead to the commitment of financial resources for project implementation. Contact your local NRCS for more information or www.nrcs.usda.gov/NRCSProg.html.

Watershed Assistance Grants (WAG): The River Network allocated funding to build capacity of existing or new watershed partnerships to protect and restore their watersheds. For more information, visit their website at www.rivernetwork.org.

STATE PROGRAMS

Coastal Conservancy: The Conservancy has grant funding for the acquisition, restoration and enhancement of significant coastal and Bay resource and habitat lands. Grants are also available for the preparation of plans for the enhancement and restoration of wetlands, dunes, rivers, streams, and watersheds. State and local agencies and non-profits may apply. Contact the Coastal Conservancy at (510) 286-1015.

Wildlife Conservation Board: Inland Wetlands Conservation Program and Riparian Habitat Conservation Program: WCB acquires and restores wildlife habitat throughout California. WCB also manages the Inland Wetlands program for the acquisition and restoration of wetlands in the Central Valley and Riparian Habitat conservation program focuses on protecting and restoring riparian systems throughout the state. For more information on available funding, contact Marilyn Cundiff (Inland Wetlands) or Scott Clemons (Riparian) at (916) 445-8448.

Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEM): The EEM program statute allows for \$10 million a year when approved by the legislature for the supplemental mitigation for highway work in three categories, one of which is resource lands. Grants are available for projects that mitigate, directly or indirectly, the environmental impacts of new or modified transportation facilities. Grants are available for land acquisition, restoration enhancement and pollution reduction. Eligible applicants include any local, state, or federal agency, or non-profits. Deadline is in November. Contact the EEMP Coordinator, California Resources Agency, at (916) 653-5656.

Habitat Conservation Fund: The California Department of Parks and Recreation administers this grant program for local public agencies for the acquisition and restoration of wildlife habitats and significant natural areas. Deadline is in October. Contact Odell King at (916) 653-7423 or check out website at www.cal-parks.ca.gov.

Nonpoint Source (NPS) & Water Quality Planning Program: The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) offers funding (grants and loans) for projects that improve or protect water quality that is impaired or threatened by non-point source pollution through the NPS section of the SWRCB. State and local agencies and non-profits may apply. For more information, contact Paul Roggensack (loans to address water quality associated with discharges and estuary enhancement) at (916) 657-0673, Paul Lillebo [205(j) planning grants] at (916) 657-1031, or Lauma Jurkevics [319(h) implementation grants] at (916) 657-0518 or visit their website at www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/nps/home.html.

Transportation Enhancement Activities Program: the federal intermodal surface transportation efficiency act of 1991 (ISTEA) required that states spend a minimum of 10% of their surface transportation program funds on “transportation enhancements” such as the acquisition of scenic lands and mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff. The program is now called transportation equity act for the 21st century (tea-21). Contact the Caltrans’ transportation enhancement activities office at (916) 654-5275 or visit www.dot.ca.gov/hq/transenhact.

Department of Fish and Game (DFG):

Fisheries Restoration Program: Also known as the “SB 271 program”

This section is being updated

Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

This section is being updated

Caltrans Mitigation: Caltrans frequently looks for wetlands projects that can be used to mitigate approved highway projects. Contact your local Caltrans office.

Urban Streams Restoration Program: This program is offered by the Department of Water Resources Division of Planning and Local Assistance. The objective is to assist

communities in reducing damages from stream bank and watershed instability and floods while restoring the environmental and aesthetic values of streams, and to encourage stewardship and maintenance of streams by the community. For more information, check out www.dpla.water.ca.gov/environment/habitat/stream/usrp.html.

LOCAL

General Obligation Bonds: Cities, counties, and recreation and Park districts have authority to issue bonds for park and open space purposes. If approved, bonds and the interest they incur are re-paid through an increase in property taxes. Current law requires passage by a 2/3 majority vote – bonds issued to fund specific, popular projects are more likely to be approved.

Assessments: An assessment may also be referred to as a ‘special’ or ‘benefit’ assessment and involves the levying of a charge on property owners to provide financing for public improvements. A *Landscaping and Lighting Act Assessment District* is specifically designed to fund landscaping, street lighting, and open space acquisition projects. Proposition A in Los Angeles County, which was approved by county voters in November 1992, created a countywide Landscaping and Lighting Assessment District.

Local Park Districts: Many local or regional park districts are actively involved in acquiring and restoring wetland and riparian habitat. For more information, contact your local park district office.

Flood Control Districts: The acquisition and restoration of wetlands and watershed areas is increasingly recognized as providing both environmental and flood control benefits. Contact your local district to determine if funds are available.

Regional Water Quality Control Board: The Regional board makes an effort to direct Administrative Civil Liability fines to local projects. For more information, call Will Bruns at (510) 622-2327 or Carol Thornton at (510) 622-2419.

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF): NFWF has numerous grant programs for the acquisition and restoration of wetlands and watersheds. 2:1 matching funds are required. For more information, call Eric Hammerling at (415) 778-0999 or visit www.nfwf.org.

Ducks Unlimited (DU): DU provides technical assistance, matching funds and help in securing grants for the completion of wetland habitat restoration projects on both public and private land. Call the Western Regional Office of DU at (916) 852-2000.

Packard Foundation: The foundation’s Conserving CA Landscapes Initiatives funds habitat protection and watershed projects in the Central Valley, Sierra, and Central Coast. For more information and grant guidelines, call (650) 948-7658 or www.packard.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Options for Wetland Conservation: A Guide for California Landowners - Published by the California State Coastal Conservancy, 1994. For a copy, call the Conservancy at (510) 286-1015.

Funding for Habitat Restoration Projects – A Compendium of Current Federal Programs with Fiscal Year 1996-1998 Funding Levels. Published by Restore American's Estuaries. Download from the Internet at www.estuaries.org/funding.html or call (202) 289-2380.

*This information was partially derived from the State Water Resources Control Board RFP for the 319 funding. The Wetland Bank fact sheet provides a sampler of the funding programs available for wetland conservation projects. This fact sheet was developed in cooperation with The Conservation Fund (916) 498-1479, the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (510) 286-6767, and the Trust for Public Land (415) 495-5660.

Acronyms

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
CBC	California Biodiversity Council
CCC	California Conservation Corps
CCRISP	California Continuing Resource Investment Strategy Project
CERES	California Environmental Research Evaluation System
CFA	California Forestry Association
CRMP	Coordinated Resource Management Plans
CSU	California State University
DOC	Department of Conservation
DFG	California Department of Fish and Game
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FFFC	Fish, Farm and Forestry Communities
FY	Fiscal Year
ICE	Information Center for the Environment
NCRWQCB	North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRPI	Natural Resources Projects Inventory
QAQC	Quality Assurance and Quality Control
RCD	Resource Conservation District
RCRC	Regional Council of Rural Counties
RFP	Request for Proposal
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Boards
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UWA	Unified Watershed Assessment
WMI	Watershed Management Initiative
WWG	Watershed Work Group

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California Biodiversity Council –Background
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The California Biodiversity Council was formed in 1991 to improve coordination and cooperation between the various resource management and environmental protection organizations at federal, state, and local levels. Strengthening ties between local communities and governments has been a focus of the Council by way of promoting strong local leadership and encouraging comprehensive solutions to regional issues. For more information on the Council please see the website <http://ceres.ca.gov/biodiv/> or contact Erin Klaesius at (916) 227-2661 Erin_Klaesius@fire.ca.gov.

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